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Memorial Park ceremonies to unveil mortars

Two 81 millimeter mortar guns, commonly known as howitzers, have been obtained through the efforts of the Carbondale Memorial Day Committee, and will be unveiled and dedicated at the city's Memorial Park on Memorial Day, May 31.

Jay Sara, committee chairman, told the NEWS that the howitzers will be mounted on concrete bases and the committee is currently taking bids for the work. Through the generosity of Gabriel and Cieciorka Monument Company, inscribed monuments will be erected before each howitzer, reading: "81 MM Mortar. This mortar was used extensively during World War Two. The accuracy of this weapon was detrimental to the enemy. This field piece was obtained from the Army by the Carbondale Memorial Day Committee."

Sara mentioned that the howitzers were shipped from an Alabama Army base and were released to the Committee through the Rock Island Army Depot, Rock Island, Illinois. The committee was charged $350 in shipment and transportation costs to bring the guns to the city.

The howitzers replace the cannons taken from the park and donated by the city to a scrap drive in 1942 when the U.S. government issued a call for metals needed for manufacturing war materials.

In addition to the placement of the guns and monuments, concrete sidewalks will be installed leading from the park entrance to the Korean-Viet Nam monument. Monument areas will be enclosed by a cyclone fence except for the Grand Army of the Republic monument at the park's center. The committee hopes to have the fencing in place prior to Memorial Day.